

number of visitors. A big *saltram*, open to all classes of people, was very necessary there and should be constructed out of public funds. The member suggested that Government should issue orders for building operations being started forthwith.

DEWAN'S REPLY: നിങ്ങൾ പറഞ്ഞിട്ടുള്ള സംഗതിയെപ്പറ്റി ഗവണ്മെന്റിൽനിന്നും ആലോചിക്കുന്നതാണ്.

(The request made in your representation will be considered by the Government.)

60. Public Health.

MR. NANO O PILLAI VASUDEVAN PILLAI (*Municipal Council, Changanacherry*) said that a perusal of the Administration Report of the Sanitary Department for 1104 showed that much of the suffering and mortality of the people in rural areas was due to their ignorance of the elementary principles of hygiene. The Sanitary Commissioner recommended the provision of a protected water supply, conservancy and scavenging arrangements, health education of the masses and a remodelling of some of the villages. If Government had paid special attention to the education of the masses on questions of health, the other reforms contemplated by the Sanitary Commissioner would have followed in its wake.

The masses should be educated in at least the elementary principles of sound health. Government should sanction the publication of a health magazine in Tamil and Malayalam by, or under the supervision of, the Medical Department. The experience and knowledge of the officers of the Sanitary, Medical and Ayurvedic Departments could be made use of for the purpose. Occasionally, pamphlets, leaflets, etc. relating to the prevention of contagious diseases should also be freely published.

The ignorance of boys and girls leaving the primary and secondary schools in matters relating to health was appalling. Health readers should be prescribed for study at certain stages of the children's educational career. Though health readers were already prescribed as text-books, the subject was only one among the optional subjects. The subject should be included among the compulsory subjects and a minimum fixed for the purpose of examinations and promotions to higher classes. As children discontinued their studies mostly after passing the fourth and seventh classes in Vernacular schools and the third and fifth Forms in English schools, it was desirable that the readers should be prescribed particularly for those classes. The subjects to be studied, the mode of their treatment, etc. should be decided by a committee of experts of the Medical, Sanitary and Education Departments.

Instruction in rules of health could also be imparted by the hiring and distribution on a large scale of cinema films conducive to the improvement of public health. They should be exhibited in all congested areas, chiefly in places where the people were illiterate.

It was mentioned in the Administration Report of the Sanitary Department that the Government were considering the question of opening a sanatorium in Travancore for the treatment of tubercular patients. The approach road to the proposed sanatorium which was referred to in the Dewan's opening Address should be constructed expeditiously.

There was no law restricting the movements and residence of persons suffering from contagious diseases of a chronic character within municipal limits. Their number was increasing day by day. Some legislation should be passed on the subject. Legislation should also be introduced for restricting the hours of work in firms, factories, etc.

The rule regarding the provision of playgrounds in schools was too seldom followed in Vernacular Middle Schools. The Inspectors of schools should be asked to pay particular attention to the physical training of school children and to see that every pupil took part in one or other out-door game. The physical training of the pupils of Forms IV, V and VI in English High schools was also quite uncared for. The training imparted by the Drill Masters in most schools was antiquated and unsuited to existing conditions. A new scheme of physical training should be drawn up in consultation with the Physical Instructors appointed in the Colleges for adoption in all classes of High Schools.

Medical examination of children in schools should be made compulsory. The medical examination of children in grant-in-aid schools was often neglected. It was necessary to collect and keep certain statistics relating to the health of children in primary and middle schools. The Inspector's report should contain some general information relating to the health of children in schools, and particularly about their common ailments.

The member concluded his representation by suggesting that poor children starving at mid-day in the various schools should be supplied with meals at the cost of Government. In the previous session of the Assembly, the Dewan said in reply to a representation that it would cost Government a very large sum if they were to supply free noon-day meals to poor school children. But, as a matter of fact, the cost would not be much as the children desiring to take part in free meals would be very few.

DEWAN'S REPLY: Mr. Vasudevan Pillai. Your representation contains many useful suggestions which, I may assure you, will receive the best consideration at the hands of Government. Some of the points that you mentioned have already struck Government and the departments concerned and measures are being already taken on the lines you have suggested. The Public Health Department has undertaken a scheme of health lectures to be delivered in various parts of the State and you must have seen from my Opening Address that that department has been able to deliver a large number of lectures within the short period of its existence and that these lectures are illustrated by cinema films. The department has also been printing and publishing a number of

phlets and leaflets relating to public health and hygiene and the causes and remedies of ordinary diseases and epidemics in the State.

You have also urged that some steps must be taken to give boys and girls in schools some instruction in hygienic principles. As a matter of fact, as you yourself said, there is even now provision for that. You say that the subject is not made compulsory now. But you will also see that some of the reading lessons which are compulsory themselves deal with questions of hygiene. The Public Health Department, I am sure, will take note of the suggestions that you have made for further development on these lines and recommend to Government measures for their accomplishment. When their recommendations are received Government will give their best consideration to these points.

In regard to the last point, namely, noon-day meals, Government have not said that it is not necessary. As I pointed out last year, that is a financial question, and that, more than any other, is a direction in which the public can render a great deal of help. I mentioned, I believe, last year the name of one public-spirited gentleman who has set apart a fairly big sum of money for the purpose—I mean Rao Sahib Padmanabha Rao. I am sure that there are several other equally public-spirited gentlemen in Travancore who will be able to help in the same way and I hope that we shall have more and more such people coming forward with donations and funds that will make this evil that you have now mentioned a thing of the past ere long.

61. Improvement of the existing system of medical aid.

MRS. G. SANKARA PILLAI (*Nominated*) speaking in Malayalam, said that Government should devote greater attention to the combating of infant mortality, miscarriage and deaths during child-birth. There were no reliable statistics relating to them and the available figures bore no reasonable relation to those of British India and other countries or to truth. On a rough estimate, not less than 20,000 infants died in Travancore in 1105. The arrangements made for the collection of vital statistics were incomplete and unsatisfactory in as much as no agency was provided for recording deaths during child-birth. Roughly, about 3,000 women died in a year during the period of maternity—to say nothing about those who died in expectant motherhood.

The member expressed the sense of gratitude of the public for the efforts the Government had already made towards supplying a considerable number of trained nurses and midwives for maternity and child-welfare work in rural areas and for the commendable services they had rendered during the previous few years. The supply of nurses and midwives, however, was not adequate to meet the needs of the whole country. Ten times the existing number would be hardly sufficient for the purpose. It was therefore necessary to train many more women in maternity and child-welfare work in different parts of the country.

Child-welfare centres should be established in various parts of the State and arrangements should be made to render timely aid to destitute women during maternity. It was gratifying to see that the private